Tuberculosis Fact Sheet
Hawaii State Department of Health
March 2005

Tuberculosis is an airborne disease caused by very small bacteria. It usually affects the lungs, and these cases are most infectious. It may also infect and affect other parts of the body. Individuals can be infected with TB when a person with TB disease of the lungs or throat coughs, sneezes, or sings.

Signs and symptoms of TB disease include:

- Cough
- Fever
- Night sweats
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss and fatigue

If infected with TB, persons who are immuno-compromised (persons with HIV infection, cancer, chronic kidney failure, etc) are at an increased risk of progressing to active disease.

The World Health Organization estimates:

- TB is the leading cause of death from an infectious disease
- Someone in the world becomes infected with TB every second
- 9 million persons become ill from TB, and among these, 2 million will die of TB each year
- TB is the single biggest killer of young women in the developing world.
- More than 100,000 children die of TB every year

In the United States, 14,511 active TB cases were diagnosed in 2004 (case rate of 4.9 per 100,000), which is a 3.3% decline from 2003 and one of the smallest annual declines since 1993.

In Hawaii, 116 TB cases were diagnosed in 2004. Hawaii had the highest state rate in the United States in 2004 with a TB case rate of 9.2 cases per 100,000 (1.9 times the national rate).

Around Hawaii:

- Oahu continues to report the highest number of TB cases in the State.
- The City and County of Honolulu reported 87 cases of TB.
- The County of Maui reported 18 cases of TB.
- The County of Hawaii reported 7 cases of TB
- The County of Kauai reported 4 cases of TB.

WHO estimates that 1/3 of the world's population is infected with TB. Skin tests have been in use over 100 years.

In Hawaii, DOH clinics placed and read 53,818 skin tests in 2004 statewide; among these, 19.2% were positive. A new diagnostic tool, QuantiFERON(R)-Gold, was approved for use in the US by the Food and Drug Administration in December 2004. Hawaii's TB Control Program has moved forward and secured special state funding to implement this new blood test. This major shift in methodology should improve the specificity of TB testing and reduce the number of false positive tests -- thereby allowing the program to focus testing and treatment of latent TB infection on persons at highest risk for progression to active TB disease.